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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 000315

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STATE FOR WHA/CAR-RCOLLINS AND INR/IAA-RCARHART  
STATE ALSO FOR DS/IP/WHA, DS/ITA. AND DS/ICI/PII  
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [SNAR](#) [CH](#) [GJ](#) [VE](#) [XL](#)  
SUBJECT: GRENADA: A REQUEST COUCHED IN FAMILIAR ALARMISM

REF: BRIDGETOWN 294

Classified By: Ambassador Mary Kramer, for reasons 1.4 b and d.

11. (C) Summary: During a meeting with Ambassador Kramer, advisors to Grenada Prime Minister Keith Mitchell requested U.S. assistance in bringing a naval floating hospital to Grenada during Cricket World Cup (CWC) 2007. Barry Collymore and Dr. Rudy Webster warned that the opposition would take advantage of the situation if the International Cricket Commission (ICC) canceled Grenada's participation in the March 2007 event. Throughout the meeting, Dr. Webster continuously underscored concerns over the opposition's growing radical ideology and its desire to change Grenada's democratic system. In between the scare tactics that echoed previous conversations between PM Mitchell and Ambassador Kramer, Dr. Webster evoked past U.S. generosity and the 1983 U.S. intervention. Dr. Webster also noted the growing number of left-of-center leaders in the region and Grenada's newly established relations with the PRC. The GOG envoys, arguments thinly veiled the implied threat of a coup d'etat and loss of U.S. influence on the island if more USG assistance fails to materialize. End Summary.

Health Facilities Lacking to Host CWC  
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12. (C) Ambassador Kramer met February 9 in Bridgetown with Barry Collymore, advisor to Grenada's PM Keith Mitchell, and Dr. Rudy Webster, Director and Chairman of the Health and Medical Committee in Grenada for CWC 2007. The meeting was held at the request of the GOG to discuss the inadequacy of its medical preparations for the upcoming international event. Dr. Webster explained that the GOG had started a project to add a second phase to the General Hospital, a 325-bed facility. Unfortunately, Hurricane Ivan, in 2004, and Hurricane Emily, in 2005, forced postponement of the project. The ICC's recent inspection of Grenada found that it had insufficient hospital beds or facilities to deal with a mass casualty scenario. The ICC warned the GOG that failure to provide additional hospital beds and necessary health equipment would disqualify Grenada from hosting the CWC semi-final matches. Dr. Webster said the hospital expansion would not be completed before CWC and requested that the USG provide a naval floating hospital to ensure Grenada's participation in CWC. .

Grenada Cries Wolf, Again?  
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13. (C) Ambassador Kramer responded that while she understood Grenada's predicament, this request was not for humanitarian assistance or disaster relief purposes. Dr. Webster replied that should the ICC cancel Grenada's participation, the opposition would take advantage of the situation and use it as a pretext to mount a coup d'etat. In addition, Grenada was very concerned about the growing divide between the West and the Muslims. Grenada, he said, was a soft target for terrorists looking to harm citizens from Australia and England during CWC. (Note: Currently only Australia is scheduled to play in Grenada if its team advances to the semi-finals. To Post's knowledge, Australia has not been approached for assistance, but the British High Commission in Bridgetown confirmed the GOG asked it also for a floating hospital.) According to Dr. Webster, the presence of a U.S.-run medical school and Grenada's laissez-faire attitude toward security added to its attractiveness for terrorists. Dr. Webster feared the growing divide in other parts of the world was fueling the opposition, whose ideology had not progressed since 1983. It certainly did not help, he added, that several countries in the region had leftist governments.

14. (C) Collymore added that the opposition had espoused militant ideas on national radio in response to the GOG imposing a five percent tax. The opposition had called for the electricity to be shut off nationwide and for businesses to close down in protest. They lack respect for the rule of law, he said, and their demonstrations during the chaos that ensued after Ivan illustrate this point. According to Collymore, the opposition is getting desperate since they are losing followers due to Grenada's stability and the only alternative to PM Mitchell, he warned, is a radical leftist. Ambassador Kramer asked if earlier opposition attempts to destabilize the GOG had been successful; Collymore replied that they had not been.

15. (C) Collymore argues, however, that the PRC would very much like to see the opposition in power. Dr. Webster took the opportunity to explain the reason the GOG had switched from the ROC to the PRC, claiming that the ROC had treated the PM badly, thus leaving the GOG with no other option but to "get into bed with a country that was philosophically different from Grenada and the ruling party." (Note: Dr. Webster failed to mention that PM Mitchell shopped around for the best deal before siding with the PRC. The ROC refused to give into the GOG's demands and forced PM Mitchell to take the funding the PRC offered as an incentive to end relations with the ROC. End note.)

#### Other CWC Concerns

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16. (SBU) Ambassador Kramer asked if the GOG had other concerns regarding CWC. Dr. Webster replied that security and disaster management were on the top of the list. Ambassador Kramer said Grenada was probably further ahead in terms of disaster preparedness than other Eastern Caribbean countries and noted that the water system had not failed during Hurricane Emily. Mr. Collymore responded that, thankfully, Hurricane Emily did not lead to mass casualties for which Grenada would have been unprepared in July 2005.

#### COMMENT: Same Old Song

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17. (C) Dr. Webster is a former Barbadian Ambassador to the U.S. who served during the George H.W. Bush and William J. Clinton administrations. He explained that he lives in Grenada rather than Barbados because his wife is Grenadian. As a seasoned politician who unabashedly plays on all our fears while reminding us of our generous spirit, Dr. Webster seems to have been sent by PM Mitchell to bail the GOG out of yet another possible disaster. PM Mitchell cannot afford to lose hosting CWC as the revenue that would come from such a large event would help jump-start Grenada's frail economy; losing the match would also be a blow to the island state's prestige, reflecting poorly on the PM and the New National Party, in power since 1994.

18. (C) The scaremongering employed by PM Mitchell and his advisors is again conveniently timed to spur the USG into providing a quick-fix to Grenada,s current challenge, preparations for Cricket World Cup. By approaching the UK and probably Venezuela for similar or additional medical support, the PM is clearly eager to address the short-fuse need with help from any quarter. Similar tactics were used in 2004 shortly before the USG announced it would donate over 40 million USD in aid for disaster relief and reconstruction efforts after Hurricane Ivan. Once the GOG received that aid, PM Mitchell soon forgot the coup threat and rejected U.S. military presence in Grenada; several neighboring countries, including Venezuela, were permitted to send in uniformed troops to maintain order.

19. (C) In recent months, U.S. officials met with several senior GOG security officials to investigate PM Mitchell's fears of the opposition looking to unseat him (reftel). Emboffs concluded, once again, that little evidence exists to corroborate PM Mitchell's claims or those of his advisors.

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